



Functional MASTERPIECE

A Montana guest cabin takes an artistic turn.

By Ronda Mollica ◀ Photography by Heidi Long / Longviews Studios

Builder Walt Landi selected several materials to cover the exterior of the home including poplar bark siding, prairie field stone and cedar board and batt.



finding the perfect property for your cabin can be an ordeal. For Tom and Marilyn Waggoner, it was a wet and wild adventure — they hired a guide to raft them down Montana’s Swan River for a little fishing and to search for rural land.

The exciting ride down the Swan provided the couple with several leads that met their criteria: It was important to not only *see* the river from the building site, but also to *hear* it. “I just love the sound of rushing water,” says Marilyn. “We found a few lots by water, but when we traveled to the sites by land, there was

one site that stood out.”

A 30-acre wooded parcel was just placed on the market and the Waggoners jumped on it. “We bought it with a friend and divided it up — our portion was 10 buildable acres,” Tom says. “The other 20 acres had an little old cabin that needed restoring, and our friend restored it into his vacation home.”

Tom and Marilyn had plans to build their home near the river and add a smaller guest home, but due to building codes and the lay of the land, the guest house was actually sited closer to

the river. During the planning of the guest house, the Waggoners began their relationship with Walt Landi, a well-respected and awarding-winning home builder in Whitefish, Montana.

Landi’s company, High Country Builders, has a reputation for designing homes that blend with the surroundings by using materials that mirror the local colors, textures, and plant life. After the Waggoner’s primary home was built, plans for the guest cottage were soon in the making.

Landi’s partner, designer Randy

The prairie fieldstone fireplace (opposite) features a stone header above the firebox.

Structural king trusses offer a rustic touch. Look closely, and you’ll find a mountain lion that provides a more feral touch in the rafters.



Marilyn & Tom Waggoner





"We chose five different natural elements for the exterior of the cabin, including prairie fieldstone, cedar logs, barnwood, board and batt, poplar bark siding, along with cedar shake roofing," says builder Walt Landi.

and is topped with several Indian-made rugs. "Our decorating scheme started with one Indian rug that a designer friend and I bought at an auction," says Marilyn. "From this came the russet reds, earthy browns, and beiges that we selected for the fabrics, paint and furniture in each room."

A rear porch and attached deck draws guests outside from the great room through a pair of reclaimed French doors. "The deck becomes an extension of the room and allows the home to feel much bigger. This is where you can see and hear the river and totally enjoy the

wildlife of Montana," says Marilyn.

The outdoor living space is outfitted with cushioned wicker furniture, piped-in gas lanterns, a frost-free TV, and a built-in grill. Most furnishings are snuggled around a full masonry fireplace under the porch overhang.

Landi's "color" portion of the home is easily seen in the building materials. "We chose five different natural elements for the exterior of the cabin, including prairie fieldstone, cedar logs, barnwood, board and batt, and poplar bark siding, along


with cedar shake roofing," says Landi. "These time-tested materials meld with the wooded landscape and present a rustic modern cabin look."



Cedar logs, posts, and beams were used inside and out to match the towering cedars that populate the area. “We wanted the home to feel like it had been here a long time, with the essence of a trapper’s cabin,” says Tom. “The cabin looks like it’s had several additions built on over the years, with each addition being made of a different material.”

The craftsmanship that came into play during construction goes beyond what the early pioneers could ever accomplish. Masons strategically placed the massive boulders to form the two chunky fireplaces; timber artisans shaped and placed the cedar posts and trusses and helped turn a vacation cottage into a masterpiece.

“We also wanted to preserve the landscape and build as close as possible to the 200-year-old cedar tree that grows in the front yard,” adds Tom. “This gives the impression that this building has been here for a long time.”

“It was a delight to build a small-scale home that still has the design impact of some of our bigger homes,” says Landi. 



Preserving the towering 200-year-old tree in the front was a top priority for the Waggoners during construction of their guest cabin.



The poplar bark siding (above left) is about as authentic as it gets — it includes moss and lichen. The worn and reclaimed materials (center) give the illusion of a much older home. The roof is covered with cedar shake shingles. The weathered look continues with board and batt detail (above right).

Floor plan



To see more photos of this cabin, go to www.loghomesnetwork.com/waggoner

RESOURCES

- Square Footage: 1,970
- Bedroom: 1
- Bathroom: 1
- Builder: High Country Builders, Whitefish, MT
- Designer: Randy Kaatz, Classic Log Designs, Bend, OR
- Log builder: Sherman Creek Logwork, Eureka, MT
- Interior design: Patricia Wood & Co., Harbor Springs, MI
- Doors: Artisans Doors of Montana, Kalispell, MT
- Landscaping: Doepker Landscaping, Kalispell, MT
- Cabinets: Old World Cabinetry, Whitefish, MT
- Lighting: Roc Corbett, Bigfork, MT
- Fireplace equipment: Damon Designs, Kalispell, MT
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